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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000979

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [KPAL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [KCRS](#) [IZ](#) [PA](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: BAGHDAD PALESTINIANS RETURN TO IRAQ, BUT MORE
BUSES MAY BE LEAVING TO THE BORDER SOON

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 000918

[B. B\) AMMAN 002061](#)

[C. C\) JERUSALEM 002061](#)

[D.](#)

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert Ford for reasons
1.4 (B) and (D).

[1. \(C\) Summary.](#) On March 22, Iraqi Ministry of Interior Border Officials escorted the 88 Palestinians (note: not 89) out of the No Man's Land (NML) between the Iraqi and Jordanian border (ref A) and back into Iraqi territory. The Palestinians are now located in Trebil close to the border in Anbar. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Human Rights Organization president reported March 21 that three more busloads were planning to depart to either the Syrian or Jordanian border within the next week. We have asked the Palestinian Charge and Palestinian human rights organization to urge the community not to flee to the borders. Post has also alerted the Iraq Security Forces (ISF) and MNF-I as to the precarious security situation that exists in Baghdad for Palestinians. ISF representatives were non-committal but open to requests for security. Despite these efforts, we believe more Palestinians will seek to leave Baghdad to the Syrian and Jordanian borders, especially in light of recent death threat letters reportedly received by 120 Baghdad Palestinians families March 23. End Summary.

PALESTINIANS NO LONGER IN NO MAN'S LAND

[2. \(C\)](#) On March 22, UNHCR as well as Palestinian representatives reported to AmEmbassy Amman and AmEmbassy Baghdad that Iraqi MoI officials had peaceably moved the 88 Palestinians from the NML to the border town of Trebil (al Anbar province). The UNHCR further reported that 88 Palestinians were in fact in the camp and not 89. The families are reportedly safe in an MoI barracks shelter and are awaiting receipt of additional assistance that the UNCHR is attempting to coordinate.

MORE PALESTINIANS POSITIONED TO LEAVE TO BORDERS

[3. \(C\)](#) Human Rights Organization President Muhammed Abid Mutlak Mowsiq and Deputy Said Mustafa told PolOffs March 21 that three more busloads of Baghdad Palestinians were planning to depart to either the Syrian or Jordanian borders within the next week. Poloffs urged Mowsiq and

Mustafa to encourage these groups not to flee to the borders. Mowsiq replied that he did not have the ability to stop these groups from doing so and emphasized that the security situation for Palestinians had made staying in Iraq untenable.

14. (C) Mowsiq further explained that the Baladiat compound was already adequately protected by MNF-I patrols, but neither MNF-I nor ISF had the capabilities of protecting Palestinians every minute of the day. For this reason, he said, many Palestinians had left their jobs, pulled their children from local schools, and spent their days confined in their homes. He also noted that four additional Palestinians had been killed between March 18 and March 20, bringing the total death toll to 21 since the Samarra bombing on February 22.

5.(C) On March 23 UNCHR reported to AmEmbassy Amman and Baghdad that 120 Palestinians families received death threat letters that morning from an anonymous source indicating that the families had 10 days to leave their homes or be killed. As of late March 23, Poloffs had not been able to reach Palestinian representatives for confirmation. These new developments may further induce Palestinian families to flee Baghdad.

POST EFFORTS TO DETER FLIGHT

16. (C) In separate conversations March 22 and 23 with Minister of Defense Sadoun Duleimi and MoD Acting Chief of Staff LTG Abadi, Acting PolmilCouns stressed concern for

BAGHDAD 00000979 002 OF 002

Palestinian security and urged that the Palestinian complex be closely monitored and provided with adequate security. Acting PolMilCouns also stressed to the MOI Director of Operations for Border Security the importance of working to resolve the issues at the border. Both MoI and MoD officials expressed general openness to these concerns, but did not provide any commitments. PolmilOff also highlighted this situation March 23 with Multi-National Division Baghdad, who took note of these security concerns.

17. (C) In a March 23 phone conversation, PolOff asked the Palestinian Charge, Dalil Mikael al-Qusous, to encourage Palestinian communities in Baghdad not to flee to the borders. The Charge seemed amenable to that request and even went so far as to say that he would go to the border to encourage the 88 to return to Baghdad if safe travel was provided for him.

COMMENT

18. (C) Post thanks AmEmbassy Jordan and AmConsul Jerusalem for their quick responses. Because of the recent death letters, we believe that further flight from Baghdad is likely. It is possible that because the 88 Palestinians were removed from the NML back into Iraq, this may deter Baghdad Palestinian families from attempting to cross the Jordanian borders. Groups who want to leave Iraq may instead choose the Syrian border as a more likely entry point. Post will continue to monitor this situation.
KHALILZAD